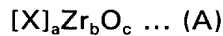


4. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said catalytic layer further includes an upstream layer formed at an upstream section of said exhaust gas purifying catalyst, said upstream section being located upstream of said HC reforming catalyst component layer and said CO reforming catalyst component layer relative to flow direction of exhaust gas, said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium.

5. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said zirconium oxide carrying rhodium contains alkaline earth and has a composition represented by the following formula (A):



where X is an alkaline earth metal selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium and barium; a and b are ratios of atoms of elements; and c is a number of oxygen atoms required for satisfying valences of X and Zr, in which a is within a range of from 0.01 to 0.5, b is within a range of from 0.5 to 0.99, and $a + b = 1.0$.

6. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a NOx reducing catalyst component functioning to reduce nitrogen oxides is contained in at least one of said HC adsorbing layer, said HC reforming layer, said CO reforming layer and said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium.

7. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a NOx reducing catalyst component functioning to reduce nitrogen oxides is contained in at least one of said HC adsorbing layer, said HC reforming layer, said CO reforming layer and said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium, said NOx reducing catalyst component containing at least one selected from the group consisting of palladium, platinum, rhodium, alumina, alkali metal and alkaline earth metal.

8. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said zeolite contains H-type β -zeolite having a Si/2Al ratio ranging from 10 to 500.

9. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said zeolite contains H-type β -zeolite and at least one of MFI, Y-type zeolite, USY-type zeolite and mordenite.

a1 10. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said zeolite contains at least one selected from the group consisting of palladium, magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, silver, yttrium, lanthanum, cerium, neodymium, phosphorus, boron and zirconium.

11. (Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a NOx reducing catalyst component functioning to reduce nitrogen oxides is contained in at least one of said HC adsorbing layer, said HC reforming layer, said CO reforming layer and said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium, said NOx reducing catalyst component containing at least one selected from the group consisting of alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, said NOx reducing catalyst component containing at least one selected from the group consisting of potassium, cesium, magnesium, calcium and barium.
